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Letter dated 4 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to forward to you herewith the observations of the Government of the Republic of Uganda on the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (S/2005/603) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Francis K. **Butagira**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 4 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Observations of the Government of the Republic of Uganda on the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2005/603)

1. Introduction

The Government of the Republic of Uganda welcomes the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). The report, which is presented in accordance with Security Council resolution 1592 (2005) of 30 March 2005, highlights the work of the Organization in executing the mandate given under that resolution. It also analyses political developments inside the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

2. Observations

2.1 Uganda believes that positive developments have taken place during the period under review. These include:

(a) The improvement in overall relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring States;

(b) Expansion, though not to a sufficient level, of the capacity of Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC);

(c) Voter registration in preparation for the forthcoming elections;

(d) Limited forcible disarmament of negative forces.

2.2 The above positive elements of the report notwithstanding, Uganda further believes that the following areas were either not given due attention or were not correctly reflected in the report.

A. Diplomatic relations between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

It is reported that "Uganda has yet to appoint an ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo". This is not true. Uganda has had an ambassador designate to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the last two years. On the contrary, it is the latter that has neither given an agreement to him nor appointed an ambassador to Uganda. It is therefore incumbent on the Congolese authorities to undertake the necessary steps to enable Uganda's ambassador to report to his station.

B. Dispersing militia groups in Ituri

It is stated in the report that operations by the combined MONUC and FARDC forces dispersed militia forces into surrounding areas. Dispersing these militias without disarming them leaves them with their capacity to disturb the peace. It is Uganda's view that all efforts should have been made to disarm them rather than

letting them go into the countryside with their arms. The potential to regroup and reorganize remains real.

C. Occasional collaboration of FARDC with the negative forces

Whereas it is recognized that due to poor pay and facilitation FARDC forces regularly collaborate with negative forces, no concerted effort was undertaken by MONUC to handle this problem. This remains one of the major ways in which the negative forces access arms and are allowed to reorganize. The international community needs to take urgent action to close this loophole since it is a key element in the violation of the arms embargo.

D. Targeted negative forces

While the report clearly mentions the FDLR as a force for destabilization in the region, it does not mention other forces, including ADF, NALU, PRA and the LRA, all of which have a significant and threatening presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For durable regional peace to be realized, all the negative forces have to be comprehensively handled and forcibly disarmed. The intention to restrict their movement cannot and will not constitute a final solution to the problem.

E. Clear public commitments from the Government of Uganda on security guarantees and incentives for returning rebels

The report does not reflect the actual situation. Uganda has extended a clear and well publicized amnesty backed by law for any rebel who renounces rebellion. Many rebels have taken advantage of this through MONUC. For an extended period of time Uganda has been requesting, without success, that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC allow it to open an amnesty field office in Beni. The report should have reflected this fact.

3. Conclusion

Finally, Uganda wishes to fully endorse the Secretary-General's request for additional 2,580 personnel for MONUC and his call to the international community to increase its assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in all areas, especially security reform.